

Perhaps we should round up all politicians and confine them to an isolation camp so their greed, nastiness and incompetence doesn't contaminate the rest of the country.

## Cops chasing money make roads unsafe

**S**A's appalling road death toll is mainly due to human error, yet little seems to be done in the way of law enforcement – and educating motorists seems to be not working.

And, in turn, the main reason for that is that the police services – at national, provincial as well as municipal level – are not doing their jobs.

In many cases, municipal authorities in particular, road policing is viewed as a way to augment revenue through fines. Hence, there are many roadblocks, all over cities, coercing drivers to pay fines on the spot (which is, in fact, illegal).

In too many cases, those putting up the road blocks do not care for the disruption these will cause, or the additional danger they pose to motorists.

That attitude had tragic consequences on Sunday, when three people – one of them a baby – died in a crash near a roadblock. The roadblock had been set up on a blind bend at an on-ramp on the N12 highway. An oncoming car was taken by surprise by the sudden traffic back up and smashed into a bridge.

Instead of keeping roads safe, cops are making them more dangerous with these money-making activities.

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# Post-nodal drip harms Jozi



**Martin Williams**

**DA city councillor in Johannesburg**

**Densification is inevitable. But to proceed without meaningful public participation, is reckless.**

**A** document which will profoundly affect Johannesburg's future was passed by council on Thursday, despite efforts by some councillors.

I am ashamed that, collectively, we did not do enough to ensure a better document was produced to help shape this great metro. Historians will pinpoint the Nodal Review Approval Report as an opportunity where the path to a world-class city was not taken.

Instead, a combination of personal and political point-scoring – and corruption – increased the likelihood of collapsing, overburdened infrastructure and a dystopian wasteland of suburban decay.

Of all the issues raised during two years of engagement on the nodal review, two stand out: infrastructure and public participation.

Everyone associated with property development in Johannesburg knows the obvious. This city is not coping in terms of roads, electricity, water, sewerage, etc. Traffic jams, electricity and water outages, pipe bursts, long-life potholes, overflowing sewers and stormwater drains occur across the city. A previous mayor gave a detailed presentation on this in 2017.

City entities are supposed to sign off for every new development, attesting that there is adequate provision for infrastructure and services. Many signatures are worthless. There is no comeback for the signatory, who may have been bribed. Responsibility slides away.

What we sought, and were assured of in writing, were infrastructure "overlays". These would detail how much had been budgeted for infrastructure and how this budget would be spent. We wanted to tighten up on municipal planning tribunals, whose composition seems to flout the overarching legislation, the Spatial

Planning and Land Use Management Act (Spluma). We also identified further noncompliance with Spluma.

Public participation was derisory. That's why you don't know how nodal policy will affect your neighbourhood. Attendance registers are dominated by city officials, plus developers and others who profit in this field.

There is no indication of buy-in from folk in townships or informal settlements, the supposed beneficiaries of transformation. Public meetings organised by the city were poorly attended. Neither the facilitators, nor audiences showed much grasp of what was at stake.

Privately organised meetings were well attended, prompting initiatives to oppose the nodal review. Legal action seems likely.

The city is obliged to review its metropolitan, regional, district, neighbourhood and transit-oriented nodes. Nodes are areas where increased densities and land use mixes are promoted (for example, a mix of housing and commercial buildings).

Colleagues accept without question the need to undo apartheid spatial planning. Densification is inevitable. But to proceed without meaningful public participation and without due regard for infrastructure is reckless.

There is speculation that tensions over the document may have played a role in the resignation of DA caucus leader and regional chair Funzi Ngobeni on Monday. The claim is made by senior folk in Joburg, but I don't believe it.

What I do know is that we tried, over many months and with some success, to bring about changes to the nodal review.

That process was not complete when political leadership changed at the end of last year. Take note. If need be, take action.